Insurance fund of Railways

1413. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the corpus of insurance fund of the Railways as on 31st March, 2005;

(b) the amount received in the fund annually during the last three years ending 31st March, 2005 and the amount spent from the fund, annually during the same period;

(c) whether the *ex-gratia* grant given by the Railways to the accident victims is met from the insurance fund or from the general revenues of the Railways; and

(d) the *ex-gratia* grant given to accident victims during the last three years ending 31st March, 2005; year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Railways do not have an Insurance Fund.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The *ex-gratia* grant as well as compensation are met out of Railway Revenue.

(d) The *ex-gratia* grant given to the accident victims during the last three years is as under:

2002-03: Rs. 73.19 lakh
2003-04: Rs. 89.58 lakh
2004-05: Rs. 70.80 lakh.

Prices of coking coal and iron-ore

†1414. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to decrease in the prices of iron-ore and coking coal, the prices of steel have decreased;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the extent of decrease in the prices of iron-ore and coking coal in June and July, 2005; and

(c) the evaluation regarding effect on the cost of steel production in the country due to this decrease?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) Steel prices are governed by the interplay of market forces of demand and supply. In general, prices of steel in the domestic market move in tandem with international prices. Prices of iron ore and coking coal only partly determine the final prices of steel. The recent drop in domestic steel prices is due to a general reduction in international prices. As per reports received, the long term prices of iron ore and coking coal in 2005-06 are in fact higher than those prevailing in 2004-05. However, spot prices of both iron ore and coking coal have come down in June and July 2005 as compared to May 2005 with price of iron ore fines reducing from approx. $ 63.0 per tonne to about $ 51.0 per tonne and price of coking coal from approx. $ 126 per tonne to about $ 115 tonne.

Guidelines on allotment of iron-ore mines

1415. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government are considering to bring new guidelines on allotment of iron-ore mines to remove anomalies in current system;

(b) if so, the details of the same;

(c) whether to rectify these anomalies, Government have constituted expert group for formulating national guidelines on criteria for granting approval of mining leases relating to iron-ore, manganese-ore and chrome-ore; and

(d) if so, by what time this group is likely to submit its recommendations to Government?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) An "expert group" has been constituted by the Ministry of Steel with the following terms of reference: